

# **Imaginary** species

This activity was the culmination of a series of educational experiences that taught adaptation, food webs, classification and animal behaviour. The Fellows were asked to create their own animal keeping in mind 5 key questions. 1. What does the animal eat; 2. Who eats it; 3. Where does it live; 4. How does it protect itself or attack its prey; and 5. What scientific name do you give it?

The activity played out over half an hour and served to reinforce the concepts related to evolution and design by having them apply what they have learnt. While designing their animal the Fellows realized that it is not an easy task while demonstrating the beauty of selection in evolution. It also allowed the Fellows to be creative and have some fun with the planning and being the architect of an animal that has to survive in today's environment and landscape. It forced the Fellows to consider factors such as protection, food availability, and foraging behaviour.

The Fellows came up with hilarious weird looking yet well-thought-out creatures.

# Shumbidi Bungulu

My reaction to anything that I find cute, bubbly or slimy always ends in a fancy language. That's how the name for my imaginary animal sprung up in my mind as soon as Payal asked us to draw one. Shumbidi Bungulu is super squishy/slimy/flabby. A marine invertebrate, this animal like an amphibian. In water, the animal appears neon in colour and the body resembles a slime with perforations all over. One of the perforations is quite big. It is its flexible anus-cum-mouth. To defend the animal from any pathogenic attack, just beneath the skin is an anti-bacterial lining which extends all over. The slimy breathable skin has cilia like structures which help it with locomotion. The skin also has the ability to detect any sound/vibration. In the middle, it has chameleon-like eyes protruding from each lateral side.

When on land, the animal looks like a pangolin ball. It has small plates/scales just underneath its belly. When entering land, from beneath, all the scales stack up all over the body like a shield. They also form sharp claws meant for locomotion and defence. Each scale has a small pore on it which enables the animal to breathe on land. The scale can also detect threat in the form of vibrations/ sound.

Acknowledgment: I thank Payal Bhojwani Molur for making us do such a wonderful activity! I loved making and presenting this creative work of mine.



Aishwarya S. Kumar, RHATC Fellow 2022–23 Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.



### LiMaOthosaurus mishra

The name of this species is *LiMaOthosaurus mishra*. The species has this name as it is a mix of a lion, a macaw and an ostrich. It has a red coloured mane and an olive green coloured body. Only the males possess this red mane to attract the females. Females are plain olive green. The animal is big, about 1.5 - 2 meters in length and 1 meter in height. Their tail is like that of a sting ray, sharp, pointed and long. Their eyesight is good, and they have large eyes. They are carnivores and have sharp canines. Their feet is like that of a n ostrich, and they have long legs, with longer hind legs for jumping and running. They have hollow bones that allow them

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to fly, and their wings are covered by hydrophobic feathers that allows them to stay dry after jumping in water to catch fish. They also have sharp claws to tear open meat, and opposing thumb, to perch on branches and holding things like a monkey. Their neck is of the same size as that of a lion. They have 6 limbs, out of which, 2 are modified as wings and 4 are feet. Their ears are small, and hearing is extremely weak. They have a strong-smelling ability. Their sound is a mix of lion roar and macaw call, which is a very loud, screeching yet terrifying sound. They are found in South American Rainforests, along the Amazon river banks. Their diet includes a large variety of animals, including fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, eggs and juvenile *LiMaOthosaurus mishra* as well. They don't have any natural predators, and are themselves apex predators. However, there have been records of them being hunted by locals tribes of Amazon for consumption. Their defence includes spiny tail, teeth, claws and their demonic sound. Their modes of movement include flying, perching and a little running. The IUCN status for this species is that it is Data Deficient.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Payal Molur, who engaged us in this fun, yet introspective and educative activity of creating our own imaginary animal. Also, I would like to thank Tandrali, as by looking at her bottle, I got the motivation to colour my animals red and green. At last, I would like to thank Zoo Outreach Organization and RHATC for providing this platform to us, where we can meet so many resourceful people, learn new things, imagine bravely and put out those imaginations on paper, but with a pinch of science.

Akansha Mishra, RHATC Fellow 2022–23, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.

#### Eggdie

The Eggdie (*Callidus res*) is an interesting animal. It is an egg-like creature that feeds on eggs. Eggdie lives in the desert and feasts on the eggs of the desert kingsnake in particular. To avoid predation from other snakes and birds, Eggdie camouflages like an egg and takes cover in the egg nest. Quite clever, right?

Eggdie has retractable legs and a leathery structure near its legs so that it can walk and slither across the desert sand. It has minute ear membranes beside its eyes that can help it detect ground predator movement and flee the scene. Eggdie is predominantly found in the deserts of the United States. Please do refer the image to see what this clever animal looks like.



Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Payal Molur for conceptualizing an activity like this and bringing out my creative side. Special thanks to Latha G as well for helping the team publish all this on Zoo's Print.

Lakshmi Ravinder Nair, RHATC Fellow 2022–23, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.



# Tangela Tangloom

Tangela tangloom is a creature inspired by the pokemon characters Tangela and Gloom. It has a round body covered in tentacles. Each tentacle is sticky and has retractable suckers at the end. It is a terrestrial animal that lives in a dry deciduous forest. So, it changes colour according to the seasons. During wet months, it is green in colour and can photosynthesize. During the dry season, it is brown in colour. During this time, it sends out a foul odor to attract insects and catches them with the sticky ends of its tentacles. It rolls with the wind. The suckers at each end help it to attach itself to a surface or to stop itself from going along with the wind.

Acknowledgment: I thank Payal for making us do the activities that we would make the students do while carrying out an education program. This makes us understand the games better and also increases our understanding of the hardships that could arise. I also thank her for teaching us the various ways to make teaching interactive and fun for the learners and for making us better educators as a whole.

#### **Omniptopus Tranquiiansis**

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Acknowledgment: For me, this activity was exciting & allowed me to think freely, I thank Payal Molur for conducting this activity and I am grateful that I was part of the RHATC 2022–23 batch.

Soham Parnaik, RHATC Fellow 2022–23, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.

Leokus muishishi also known as Leoke is a result of an activity conducted by Payal. Leoke is a name that came after thinking about characters of leopard and snakes, the two animals which I personally think are very efficient predators. The animal has sharp teeth to hunt or to tear flesh away, it also has fangs that have venom to hunt a bigger animal than its size. Leoke has sharp claws, long ears, and a short neck. It is dull in color so as to camouflage with its environment. Its legs are also short- for it to hide in its habitat. It also has a hard shell covering its vital organs from a predator attack - like a tiger. It is a nocturnal animal and it hunts in packs. It is found mostly in moist deciduous forests.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Payal B. Molur for conducting this activity and for making the learning process a bit more fun. I would also like to thank the whole Zoo Outreach Organization team for their support.



Tangela Tangloom

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Swaathi, Na, RHATC Fellow 2022–23 Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.

Omniptopus Tranquiiansis- This creature is an evolutionary form of octopus that lives in the Deep ocean and has symbiotic relations with corals, it takes in carbon dioxide and releases oxygen, eats phytoplankton, and scavenges on dead materials. It understands the surroundings by touching with sucker arms. It pretends to be a stone to prevent predation. Offspring are generated by parthenocarpy. The most characteristic feature is its 'third eye' which can move to any part of the body to heal that part and scan the surroundings. Migratory habit- For eight months this animal is socially active but for four months it comes out of the water, develops the undeveloped wings in one week, and flies off to another place to be isolated.



**P. Kritika**, RHATC Fellow 2022–23 Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.



#### Sandorus

Sandorus is a creature of the deserts and is found in deserts throughout the globe. It lives beneath the sand, rests during the day, and searches for prey during the night. The spots in its body absorb the solar energy during the day and charge up the light bait antenna. It flicks this antenna out of the sand during the night, and when something approaches this bait, it quickly jumps out of the sand, chomps, grabs down the prey in its strong jaws, and dives bac in the sand, where it will slowly finish off its dinner. The long, finned tail helps it cruise through the sand at high speed. It has strong limbs to fend off any threat, thus it has no natural predators in the area.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Dr. Sanjay Molur and Payal Molur for making me think creatively while being ecologically conscious.

Melito Pinto, RHATC Fellow 2022–23 Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.



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# Rattlitoda patilata



The name of my imaginary, fascinating animal is *Rattlitoda patilata*. It is only found in the rainforests of western ghats and so it is one of the significant endemic species. And because of the degradation of western ghats, it is in danger so the IUCN red list assessment declared it as Endangered.

The Rattlitoda looks like a Frog but has a rattle-like rattlesnake. So that is why named as *Rattlitoda patilata*. Also, it has fangs that spit the venom and attack on and then engulf the prey. It Shakes Rattle to warn its predators. The species has webbed feet which are helpful and used in swimming. But they also live on the ground so also known as terrestrial animals. They feed on small insects, lizards, and snails. They prefer to live near small water bodies. They also have to beware of their predators which are snakes and owls.

Acknowledgment: I want to thank Payal for inspiring me to think creatively and for giving me the tools to envision. Payal's performance of this feat was incredible. I remembered how inquisitive we had been as kids and felt like a kid again. Payal, thank you for keeping the kid alive in me.

**Pooja Ramdas Patil,** RHATC Fellow 2022–23, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.



## Ramadas lambergoni

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Ramadas lambergoni my imaginary animal is a medium sized, chiropteran which has small triangular eyes with horns. The motivation for this diagram came from the fact that on our way back from RHATC's first fieldtrip we got to witness the Pteropus medius. Bats are associated with diseases including rabies. My representation of the imaginary animal is an exaggerated version of what people perceive of them. However, bats play an essential role in pest control, pollinating plants and dispersing seeds. Therefore, through this imaginary animal I want to put out a message that bats are mostly misunderstood and bats do matter.

Acknowledgment: I would like to thank the Zoo Outreach Team especially Payal Molur to help me bring forward my creativity side forward.



My imaginary animal, Giger lives in riverine grassland. It mainly eats grass and different herbs. It has long ears for good hearing. It has stripes on the neck and abdomen for good camouflage in grassland. It has a long hairy tail, which is used to drive away flies and insects. Also, it has a strong and muscular hind leg that helps it defend itself against predators.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thanks Payal Molur for gave us the fun activity.

Rajib Saha, RHATC Fellow 2022–23 Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, TN, India.